

I. Introduction

Background and Scope of the Soviet Bloc Agreement to Supply Military Equipment to Egypt

As early as 1951, it was reported that Egypt sought to purchase armaments from Czechoslovakia. Egyptian representatives submitted proposals for such purchases to Czechoslovak representatives in Switzerland. The results of these conferences were negative. Further unsuccessful negotiations were carried out in 1953. Toward the end of the latter year, Egypt sought to purchase ammunition plant equipment from the Skoda Works. In 1954 it was reported that Egyptian delegations touring Romania, East Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia were attempting to buy arms and equipment. The government of Egypt never officially admitted that such negotiations were conducted.^{1/}

Nasser in an interview published in the London Times stated that he had contacted the Russian ambassador at the beginning of June concerning USSR supply of military

equipment to Egypt. The first discussions, in which Soviet ambassador Molod indicated that the USSR would supply artillery in exchange for Egyptian cotton, actually took place in late May. According to the London Times article, Nasser stated that he informed Ambassador Byroade of the inquiries regarding the purchase of arms from Russia and of a favorable Russian reply. Final decision on the purchase of Soviet arms was postponed until August 1955 when Nasser decided that Egypt would receive nothing from the United Kingdom and the United States. 2/

On the 28 September 1955 Egypt announced the conclusion of a commercial agreement for exchanging Czechoslovak arms for Egyptian pounds. 3/ The agreement as finally negotiated permits Egypt to pay in Egyptian products such as cotton and rice. 4/

Nasser in reply to questioning as to whether the arms would come from Russia or Czechoslovakia replied

"What is the difference?" 5/ Since Czechoslovakia has been named as the second party to the agreement it appears that Czechoslovakia is being used as the Soviet Bloc representative for arms trade with Egypt.

The initial order for Soviet Bloc military equipment reportedly signed with the Soviet Union on the 21 September 1955 provided for Soviet export of the following Soviet manufactured items to Egypt:

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These items were to be shipped from Odessa to Alexandria. 6/ The Soviet Union has reportedly offered long-term credit and a five-year supply of spare parts with each item shipped. 7/

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Czechoslovakia was willing to

supply Egypt with 150 tanks which could be delivered by
mid-December 1955, and AA and AT guns, as needed, in
exchange for rice. Delivery of these guns could begin in
early 1956. 8/

Egypt has evidently negotiated contracts for additional
Soviet Bloc military equipment. As of 8 November the total
cost to Egypt of all the Soviet Bloc arms contracted for
was reported to be the equivalent of 50,000,000 pounds
sterling (\$140,000,000).


Since the negotiations are continuing, it is likely
that Egypt will place still further orders.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

II. Reported Shipments of Soviet Bloc Military Equipment to Egypt

The first of the arms shipments connected with the Soviet Bloc-Egyptian arms agreement arrived in Alexandria on the 21 October 1955. Five Soviet ships were apparently involved in the delivery of military goods to Alexandria between 21-29 October (see Appendix A). The harbor was put off limits starting on the 21st. 11/

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As of 4 November 1955 Soviet equipment reportedly arriving in Egypt included [REDACTED] MIG's, [REDACTED] tanks, and an unknown quantity of small arms and spare parts from the Soviet Bloc. 14/ STATINTL

These figures for the number of MIG aircraft may be exaggerated somewhat, but it does seem clear that a fair number of MIGs have been delivered along with some tanks, military vehicles and small arms and ammunition.

III. Technical Assistance

Nasser claimed that the number of Soviet Bloc technicians sent to Egypt would be kept to a minimum and they would return to their own country as soon as Egyptian technicians acquired necessary knowledge and skill. 15/

Part of the armaments agreement reportedly provided that Egypt employ at least 10 Soviet experts to instruct aircraft maintenance. These experts would remain in Egypt one year from the date the last aircraft ordered by Egypt was delivered. 16/

On 26 October, 42 Soviet Bloc aircraft technicians arrived in Cairo by plane 17/ and on 5 November, 24 of them were reported at Dekhila Airfield supervising the assembly of aircraft. 18/

It was reported that accommodations for Soviet Bloc technicians and families numbering 300 were being sought in Alexandria. 19/

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Project 39.1008

**Egyptian Military Imports
from the Communist Bloc**

Summary and Conclusions

The Soviet Bloc Egyptian arms deliveries have been shrouded in secrecy. During the period 21-23 October 1955, five Soviet ships have been identified as apparently delivering military end items to Egypt.



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